The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Contents.

	PAGE
Notes of the Month	1
The Keeper of Israel. By Rev. E. Thompson	2
Working for Victory	3
Rev. John Mears. Ry Rev. R. M. King	4
Killed in Action: Lieut, R. L. Neill	6
Memorial Notices:—Mr. James M'Robert; Mrs. John Allen; Mr. Samuel Creighton; Mr. James Spence; Mr. Henry Dickson Sprott: Mr. W. M. Boomer ..	7
The Blackbird. By A. M'I. Cleland	9
Ann's Boy. By Miss Ruth Duffin	10
By the Way. Viator	12
Reports:—Unity Guild; Ballyhemlin; Crumlin; Rademon; Holywood; Mountpottinger ..	13

Notes of the Month.

The present month is one of special interest for our Church, since it contains several of our most important annual events. We made reference in May's issue to one of them, viz., the Sunday School Conference, to be held at Dromore, on the first Saturday. Now we need only say that it gives promise of being a most successful gathering. Very satisfactory arrangements have been made with the Great Northern Railway Company, so that the return fare, for those provided with the necessary voucher, will be only 1/3. Granted a fine day, therefore, there should be a large audience to hear Dr. Valentine's interesting address.

In consequence of the War, and the serious atmosphere for which it is responsible, it seems peculiarly fitting that we should have an opportunity as a united Church to assemble ourselves together for worship. Such opportunity will be given in the First Church, Belfast, on Tuesday, the 15th at 3 o'clock. In order that it may fulfil the object which its promoters had in view, it must be made as representative of all our congregations as possible. Being held at three o'clock will permit of the attendance of our country friends, and we trust that they will make a special effort to be present. Seeing that it will last for only an hour, it will be possible for Belfast business members to give their personal support to the service. As indicative of its general character, the musical part of the service will be entrusted to a united choir. The Moderator (Rev. James Kennedy, of Larne) will conduct the service, and can be depended upon to make it at once impressive and uplifting. Let us see to it that this opportunity of united prayer and praise be utilised to the full.

* *

The usual Annual Meetings of the Remonstrant Synod, Non-Subscribing Association of Irish Presbyterians, and the General Synod of the Non-Subscribing Church will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, the 15th and 16th. They have not been largely attended in recent years, and we hope for a marked improvement on this occasion. That would certainly be encouraging to those responsible for the business side of our Church work. For the past two years a lecture has been a feature of our annual gatherings, and this year

will prove no exception. The Rev. E. S. Hicks, M.A., our energetic and able Dublin Minister, is to lecture on the subject of "Religious Re-adjustment," in the First Church, Belfast, at eight o'clock on Tuesday, June 15th. We trust he will have a large and appreciative audience.

* *

It was fitting that on the occasion of the visit to Belfast of the newly-appointed Lord Lieutenant and his wife, our Non-Subscribing Church should be represented amongst the various bodies presenting addresses to their Excellencies. The persons deputed to make the presentation were the Moderator (Rev. James Kennedy) and Clerk (Rev. G. J. Slipper), and the following:—Rev. Thomas Dunkerley, Dr. John Campbell, Mr. J. M. Andrews, and Mr. A. K. Stewart, J.P.

The text of the address was as follows:—On behalf of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, we gladly avail ourselves of the opportunity afforded by your visit to Belfast to congratulate you on your appointment to the exalted position of representative of our gracious Monarch in his ancient kingdom of Ireland. Differing as we do from the other Presbyterian Churches of Ireland in holding the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures and the right of private judgment as our only terms of Church communion and membership, we yield to none in loyalty to the Throne and affection for the present Royal occupant thereof, his Majesty King George V., to whom we record our gratitude for selecting to discharge the duties of the high office of Lord Lieutenant a nobleman under whose righteous sway we have every reason to hope that the welfare of all classes of the community will be secured and the interests of peace and prosperity advanced. We pray that your Excellency's exertions for increasing the prosperity of our country and the diffusion of those great public and private virtues which alone can exalt a nation and bless a people may be crowned with success, and that He, "Who makes the very wrath of men to praise Him" may so direct the counsels of the beloved Monarch you represent that the terrible calamities of war may result in a lasting peace calculated to secure the liberty of Europe and advance the freedom and happiness of all nations. Assuring you of our hearty welcome to our island, in which welcome we venture to include her Excellency Lady Wimborne,

We sign on behalf of our Church,

JAMES KENNEDY, Moderator.
GEORGE J. SLIPPER, Clerk.

THE KEEPER OF ISRAEL.

Gen. xvi. 14—"*Beer-lahai-roi.*"

THAT was the name that Hagar gave to the well. The words signify, "The well of the Living One Who seeth me." For, at the beginning of her distress, she seems to have forgotten God; or else felt as if He had forgotten her. And yet, at that particular spot she received new hope, and knew from whence it came. Perhaps she was like too many of us, so negligent of the worship of God in consecrated time and place, that it had not entered her thoughts that He must be present and accessible in every time and place. That, at all events, was not the only time that she forgot it. In each instance the revelation of God's presence is described as an angelic vision. The first time the angel gave her good counsel and hope; the second time, when she had forgotten Beer-lahai-roi, and thought she was in "a dry and weary land, where no water is," the angel showed her a reviving spring.

The next time we are in despair or depression let us call to mind Beer-lahai-roi. For have we not all been there before now? Let us rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. The solution of our perplexity will come. God Himself will show us a way out of our distresses.

And think how suggestive of a practical measure each of the stories of Hagar is. At Beer-lahai-roi we learn to go to a wise friend who may convey to us God's counsel. In the wilderness of Beer-sheba we learn that God's means of help may be already at hand if we

will but bestir ourselves to look about for it. Hagar needed but to open her eyes to behold a well of water. Yes, if we would but deserve to remember it, God is a very present help in trouble.

WORKING FOR VICTORY.

(From The *Inquirer*.)

THERE is a growing feeling in some quarters that we are not taking the war and its hard duties with the seriousness and the unselfish courage which a time of supreme national peril demands. Our fighting men have acquitted themselves magnificently, and behind them there has been a disciplined host of civilian workers who have done their part with splendid energy and effectiveness. But large sections of the community still live in a quite normal fashion. They carry on their business as usual. They have not modified their standards of comfort. They still plan things for tneir own advantage as they have been accustomed to do in times of peace. They have a vague hope that the war will soon be over, and leave the world as pleasant a place for them to live in as it always has been hitherto. People of this kind may not be conspicuous individually; but in the mass they help to mould public opinion, to encourage a lazy type of optimism, or to dissipate in criticism and complaint the energies which ought to be concentrated on the one object of vital concern for us all.

We have just entered upon the tenth month of the war, and the end is still far off. The first excitement has died away, and in its place there is an impatient desire for some striking event which will supply a dramatic thrill tor jaded nerves, and assure us that all is well. Probably these are the days which will test us all most severely, for we have reached the dull middle stages of a long task, when we must simply set our teeth and press forward, bating no jot of heart or hope, and giving no foothold to influences which weaken and divide. There is need for all of us to be on our guard against the revival of sectional interests and the type of criticism which is more concerned with complaints about the past than with constructive proposals for the future. Several of our newspapers have erred in this way lately. In their weariness of the political truce they have dabbled freely in disintegrating criticism, and laboured to produce public discontent by the method of dark hints and vague surmise. In the House of Commons we find the Government almost paralysed in its efforts to deal effectively with the problem of drink by the resistance of commercial self-interest, the unworthy resentment of class-feeling on the side of Labour, or the doctrinaire programme of the temperance reformer. Nor does it require much gift of social observation to detect some tendency on the part of people whose routine has hardly been disturbed, just to settle down and look after their own affairs in placid confidence that Germany will be beaten, and all will come right in the end.

But we are at war, we are fighting for our existence; and the battles, which will determine whether we shall retain our liberties or fall a prey to a ruthless destroyer, are not behind us, they have still to be fought and won. There is safety for us, and a sure hope of victory, but only if we keep the mood of high seriousness in all our thoughts and ways, and all classes and sections of our people throw their own interests to the winds in devotion to the common good. In this testing hour there is only one thing that concerns us. We have got to win in this war. It does not matter if we are poor, and feel the sting of want—and that may well happen to us—if we come out of it victorious. And for this purpose we must mobilise all the practical gifts of the country, its wealth of thought and moral fervour, and its high religious passion, that the good issue for ourselves and the world may not be hindered by our devotion to selfish or partial ends, or spoilt of its full effect by divided counsels and poverty of soul.

We agree with the words of the Prime Minister, spoken recently, that the nation does not need to be goaded by

rhetoric before it can be induced to obey the calls of duty. It is not so much flaming words as serious consideration that we need. Do we realise what the calls of duty are? Do any of us shrink from putting them in the plainest possible terms to ourselves and other men? It is sacrifice that is demanded of every one of us, a spirit of fine devotion to the cause we have in hand, and of calm indifference to our private interests. There are two things which can help us to keep this temper of resolution through the difficult middle period of the war. The first is the effort to realise—religious people may do it by an act of quiet meditation—what the war means in the invaded countries. No one who has touched even the fringe of its appalling misery and wrong can put the thought away from him, or allow other interests to compete for his attention. It stands there, dominating his life, and determining all his duty, until the need is past and the avenging victory is won. The other is the sense that everything which has happened has strengthened and confirmed the moral convictions of the early days of the war. Germany put the sword of the spirit into our hands when she invaded Belgium. Her cynical disregard of honourable undertakings, and her revolting barbarism in the conduct of war have rallied the moral forces of the world against her. Something dearer than our own safety and peace is involved in the victory for which we strive. We want to win, and we would give all the high seriousness of purpose of which we are capable to the task, because it will check the proud defiance of evil men. Victory in this cause, let us dare to say it, means to our dim human sight a victory for God.

REV. JOHN MEARS, A.M.

1695–1767.

By Rev. R. Maxwell King.

THE subject of this memoir was the younger, perhaps the youngest, son of John Mears, who in his day was a man of some importance in the General Synod of Ulster. John Mears, senr., may have been born in Ireland of a family that had come from Scotland in the days of James the First's Plantation, or he may have been—as was probably the case—a Scottish minister who had settled in Ireland. References in the Minutes of the General Synod to his property in Scotland, vol. I., p. 21, would point towards this latter opinion being correct. He was married at Antrim to Margaret Gilchrist, Sept. 18th, 1677. The following is the entry —'Antrim Presbytery Register'—p. 6 "August 20th [16] 77 Purpose of Marriage betwixt Mr. John Mare of County of Down and Margaret Gilchrist of this Town. Were married Sept. 18th, 1677." I know only of two sons—Philip, who was licensed by the Presbytery of Belfast, 1704, for the Christian ministry, but was silenced by the Down Presbytery because he had first married without his parents' consent, and, secondly, had committed the sin of being married by an Episcopal minister. He died in Belfast a couple of days after his father, December 27th, 1718. John, the younger, was born about 1695, when his father was minister of Loughbrickland. He entered the University of Glasgow 1710, graduated M.A. 1713. He studied divinity under the celebrated John Simpson, whose liberal teaching evidently undermined his orthodoxy. Early in 1718 he was licensed by the Down Presbytery, and fourteen months after his father's death on December 25th, 1718, he was ordained as minister of Newtown by the same Presbytery on February 20th, 1720. The Primitive Church in Newtown having become too small for the congregation, a new one—the present structure—was begun early in his ministry, and finished in 1724. The ground and manse were given to the congregation by John and his wife, Margaret Stewart, for the sum of eight pounds.

The question of Subscription to the Westminster Confession was now a burning one. John's father had subscribed in Presbytery two years after his installation at Newtown, but John, the younger, had evidently not been

compelled to subscribe on his ordination. Considering the tyrannical way in which Presbyteries dealt in those days with their own members and with the congregations in their charge, one will not be surprised that even those who felt that they could not conscientiously sign the Confession might waver before the storm of persecution. John did so, and in 1722 made overtures to Francis Hutchinson, Bishop of Down and Connor, offering to conform

R. Hunter pinx.t J. McArdell

The Revd W.m John Mears A.M

to the Established Church. The matter came before the Down Presbytery, of which he was then Clerk, 22 Nov., 1722. As he had in 1720 sided with the Non-Subscribers, no doubt he got severely dealt with by those who intended to force Subscription. In accordance with the quaint manner of speech of the time, he ascribed his action "to the temptation of Satan," and said, "it would have a good effect on him in making him a more able advocate of the Presbyterian cause." Four members of his flock were dissatisfied with his action—a very small proportion in such a large and important congregation. They withdrew, and were erected by the Presbytery of Down into a separate congregation in May, 1723. That he had gained courage by his temporary weakness is shown by his subsequent actions. In July, 1724, Thos. Nevin, of Downpatrick, brought an action against Echlin, a layman of the Established Church in Bangor, for defamation of character. Echlin had called Nevin an Arian. When the case came on at the Downpatrick Assizes John Mears was present. The Judge having asked several of the Episcopal clergy present to explain to the bench what Arianism was; none offered to do so. Then young John Mears stood up and gave an explanation in clear language, and received in return great compliments from the Judges. In the

previous month John had himself been accused of Arianism in a pamphlet published by Gilbert Kennedy. From this charge he vindicated himself in an anonymous contribution to the letter to Kennedy (1725) by Samuel Halliday. As far as Newtown and Subscription were concerned, the matter was ended when Mears and his congregation were transferred to the Antrim Presbytery in 1725, and that Presbytery was excluded from the jurisdiction of the General Synod in 1726.

In 1735 he resigned his charge in Newtown, and was installed in Clonmel on April 9th. The charge was a small one, there being between 70 and 80 communicants. He removed to Stafford Street, Dublin, and was installed there January 9th, 1740. This congregation had separated from Capel Street Oct. 10th, 1738. In December, 1740, he preached at Wood Street a funeral sermon on John Abernethy, which was afterwards published. In 1762 Stafford Street Congregation having amalgamated with Wood Street, he became colleague with S. Bruce, father of William Bruce (1757–1841), of First Belfast. A new meeting-house was built in Strand Street for the United congregation. When it was opened January 22nd, 1764, John Mears preached the dedicatory sermon.

On the 27th October, 1767, he passed to his rest, aged 72, having been a minister for 47 years. He left one son, who settled in Calcutta, and a daughter, who married the Rev. John Brown, Presbyterian minister at Waterford.

He was the author of a catechism in three parts for the use of adult persons: London, 1732, 12mo. It was often reprinted, and was in general use in Irish Non-Subscribing Congregations as superseding The Shorter Catechism till the early part of the 18th century. The last edition, Belfast, 1818, 16mo., revised and recommended by the Presbytery of Antrim, is virtually a new catechism on the basis of Mears. Also A Short Explanation . . . of the Lord's Supper, Dublin, 1758, 12mo., mainly incorporated in "Forms of Devotion," by J. Duchall, J. Weld, J. Mears. Dublin, 1772, 12mo.

Killed in Action.

Photo—Lafayette.

LIEUTENANT R. L. NEILL.

We have to record with deep regret the death of Lieutenant Robert Larmour Neill, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. Sharman D. Neill, Ardmoyle, Marino, who was killed in action in France on May 9th. Our young friend was educated at Campbell College, where he was a member of the Officers' Training Corps, and afterwards proceeded to Neuchatel, Switzerland, for further study. He intended to devote himself to commercial life, and joined his father's business, Sharman D. Neill, Ltd. He was a keen member of the Ulster Volunteer Force. He was one of the first to respond to the call to arms at the beginning of the war, obtaining a commission in August in the Royal Irish Rifles ; he was attached

to the 5th Battalion, and was for a time stationed at the Victoria Barracks, Belfast. He left for the front on March 22nd to join the 1st Battalion, which has suffered very heavy losses. When an advance movement was made on May 8th, the 1st Battalion Royal Irish Rifles occupied the place of honour and danger in the front rank, and on the following day Lieutenant Neill fell with many another brave comrade. Though but 21 years of age, he had proved himself a gallant and efficient officer, and leaves behind him pleasant memories of other sterling qualities, which would have made him as proficient and popular in the arts of peace as of war. We tender to his parents and other members of the family our sympathy in their great bereavement.

On Sunday, May 16th, at the morning service at the First Presbyterian Church, Holywood, reference was made to the sad event by the Rev. G. L. Phelps, who, in course of his sermon, said—"It was no mere love of adventure or desire for glory that caused Lieutenant Neill to answer his country's call: it was a deep sense of duty. Educated and trained for peaceful business life, and already showing great promise therein, he was ready to sacrfice all—even life itself—for his country and for a cause. He thoroughly realised the dangers and hardships involved, but was keen to bear his part. In the last letter he wrote home—writing with full knowledge of the enormous dangers awaiting him on the morrow—there mingled with his thoughts of the dear ones at home a feeling of gratitude and pride that he had been permitted so to serve his king and country. The same spirit has animated thousands of our young men: they make the supreme sacrifice because they feel that there is something which matters more than life. We need not speak of decadence and materialism while we have this spirit manifested. We mourn the young life cut short, but we cherish his memory as a challenge and incentive. He has fought a good fight, there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness." At the end of the service the Dead March in Saul was played.

Memorial Notices.

MR. JAMES M'ROBERT, RADEMON.

We regret to announce the death of Mr. James M'Robert, of Rademon Cottage, Crossgar, Co. Down. He passed away after a long illness, extending over eight months, on Friday morning, May 7th. Falling from the top of a load of hay in August last, his spine was so severely injured that he was never again able to control his lower limbs. He was carried from the yard where the accident occurred to his bed, where he lay in complete helplessness till death gave him release from suffering. His affliction was borne with patience. He fell short of the allotted span of life, his age being sixty-seven years. He was a devoted member of our Rademon congregation, and most regular in his attendance at worship, served on the committee, and took a deep interest in all its affairs. His life was simple, and free from every kind of vice. He was a man of pure mind and upright disposition. Quiet in manner, and retiring in character, he was only known to his intimate friends, who appreciated his goodness of heart. His honesty in deed and word was transparent. He was one of the few of whom it can be truthfully said, that he never did injury to a living soul. In his relations with his neighbours, he was kind and obliging. He made no enemies. His reputation in the district was that of an honourable and reliable man. He was industrious in his business, which was that of a farmer. Hardworking and painstaking, he was fully occupied with the pursuit of his calling, and had neither the time nor the inclination for fast ways. On Sunday afternoon, attended by a large crowd of his neighbours and friends, his mortal remains were conveyed from his home (where the Rev. Moses Nelson and his son, Rev. Arthur Nelson, resided and carried on a famous school throughout their ministries in Rademon congregation), to the old burying-ground surrounding the meeting-house which he loved so well. The chief mourners were his brothers (Messrs. John and Henry

M'Robert), his nephew (Mr. William M'Robert, of the Ulster Bank, Belfast), and his cousin (Mr. David Cleland, J.P.) Mr. M'Robert was married to a daughter of the late Mr. William H. Bingham, who survives him.

* *

MRS. JOHN ALLEN.

Our Mountpottinger congregation, which has suffered serious loss by death and removal during the past two years, has again to record the passing of one who was well known to all the congregation. The death took place on May Day, at her residence, "Alton," Ormiston Park, Knock, of Mrs. John Allen, who was an old member, if not in years, in associations. The daughter of one who was himself a stipend-payer for a lengthened period, the deceased had a life-long connection with the congregation, first in the Sunday schools and then in the church. Although within recent times her failing health made it impossible for her to continue as she had been doing, there was no one took a keener interest in the church and all that pertained to it. Much sympathy is felt with her husband and the two little boys whom she leaves to mourn her loss. The interment took place on Monday, May 3rd, at Moneyrea, when Rev. M. Watkins conducted the service, and a large attendance testified to the respect in which the family is held.

* * *

MR. SAMUEL CREIGHTON.
MR. JAMES SPENCE.
MR. HENRY DICKSON SPROTT.

Within a fortnight the Dromore Church has lost by death three earnest and devoted members—Mr. Samuel Creighton, for many years a respected member of Committee; Mr. James Spence, a good father, and devotedly attached to his church; and Mr. Henry Dickson Sprott, its senior Elder, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Sunday School. Mr. Creighton, up to a few months ago, when he was stricken with an illness from which he never recovered, was rarely absent from worship, and the esteem in which he was held by his neighbours was testified to by the large number of people who followed his remains to their last resting-place. Mr. Sprott passed away suddenly and altogether unexpectedly, on Wednesday, May 5th. On the previous Sunday he was in his accustomed place in church, looking in the best of health, and on the morning of his death was attending to his customary duties. On the Sunday following the service was of a memorial character. Sympathetic reference was made to the losses the congregation had sustained. Of Mr. Sprott (who for the past ten years had been secretary of the church), the Rev. Alfred Davison said:—It was my privilege to know the late Mr. Sprott for a period of fourteen years. Many of you have known him for a much longer period. You have had ampler opportunities of understanding his real worth, his sincerity of character, his simplicity of motive, and his genuine kindliness of heart. My words, therefore, will be few, but though few they come straight from the heart. In the first place, I should like to say that from the time I came amongst you our late friend manifested towards me personally the utmost kindness and consideration—a testimony which many of you, I feel sure, will endorse as being true for yourselves. It was not easy, perhaps, to get to know him. There was a certain reserve about him which effectually prevented the formation of a sudden and shallow friendship. But, when that reserve was broken through, there was no one who would more willingly respond to the advances of any who sought to awaken his interest and friendship, and none would more readily and unselfishly share the tender feelings of his heart, or those stores of information which seemed ever to be at his command when you happened to be with him. It is a noble verdict to pronounce about a man—a verdict which in the case of our lamented friend cannot be gainsaid—that the better he was known the more deeply he was loved and admired. It was a delight to have him with us at our meetings; his influence there was always an influence for good. He was one who always knew

his mind, and frankly revealed it ; but there was no narrowness of vision—no tendency to treat small matters as of great importance ; no trace of self-will ; in fact I doubt if the humblest member of this congregation would have been more ready to yield his own opinion when he knew it was not in accord with that of others. Then, again, he was a man who had no grudges, no grievances no foolish idea that he was at liberty to withhold his services or his money until a revolution would bring about such changes as would harmonise with his opinions. Too big a man for that ; too good a man for that ; he would give his vote according to his conscience, and then help in every possible way to prosper the church. The genius of our church—its very life-breath—is freedom ; freedom to think according to your conscience on matters of theology ; freedom to bring your mind and personality to bear on questions of Biblical interpretation. But there is another word just as sacred, and that is 'loyalty.' And no man can really understand what loyalty is who thinks himself free to stand aside or hold his hand because he cannot get men to think just as he thinks, or to accept his suggestions. Such was our dear friend who is now taken from us—free, yet loyal. For us another link with the past is broken. The hand of God, which, during the past few weeks has been beckoning now one, now another, out of the ranks of our fellowship and love, has broken the full circle of our Session. Surely the voice of God is sounding throughout the whole congregation, bidding us, and particularly our young members, to fill a worthy place in the work and worship of the church. We are the heirs of great things. Your church has a long line behind it of good men and women who have served it—who have been faithful to it in season and out of season. For us thay have wrought that we might enter into a more abundant life. But we cannot live in the past ; we are of to-day, and we have a work to do. Let us then show forth our love of the church by emulating the spirit, if not the achievements, of those who have gone before us."

MR. WILLIAM MICHAEL BOOMER.

Our congregation at Dunmurry has, by the death of Mr. Wm. M. Boomer, lost a life-long member who was deeply interested in its welfare, and for upwards of forty years was a member of its Committee. In 1862 Mr. Boomer was taken into the service of the Belfast Banking Company, and after 38 years of faithful service retired on pension, and lived quietly and usefully at his residence, The Bridge, near Dunmurry, where, after a few months' illness he passed away very peacefully on Sunday morning, the 11th ultimo. The funeral, which was to the family burying-ground at Derriaghy Church, was numerously attended, and there were many expressions of sorrow at the departure of one who was so well known and highly esteemed. It is interesting to note that Mr. Boomer could trace his ancestry to an old Huguenot family that had settled in the district many generations ago. His only sister is the wife of Mr. James Morrow, J.P., Larne.

THE BLACKBIRD.

By A. M'I. Cleland.

The dry-as-dust encaverned Sage,
  Surrounded by his books and laws,
Hunting with unremitting zeal
  The Primary, the true First Cause:

Who measures sunbeams; weighs a laugh;
  Circumferentiates a smile;
Or balances the pros and cons
  Of witching childhood's winsome guile:

Who analyses love's sweet hour;
  Or vivisects the rainbow's hue;
Or holds a mother's cherishing
  Is but to selfish instinct due:

What does he know of magic spell
  By moonlight cast o'er misty field?
Can he detect the inner soul
  The perfume of a rose will yield?

What does the blackbird say to him,
  As daintily it sways the thorn?

" The morn ! the morn !
" It has come ! has come !
" I am here ! here ! here !
" Listen ! oh, listen !
" And listen again !
" Draw near ! draw near ! draw near!
" The blossom is thick ! "—

And then, with a flick
Of flashing wing,
It is off to the tree
On the farther side of the dell ;
Each liquid note,
From the fluty throat,
Ringing clear as a silver bell.

" It is there ! it is there !
" The promise fair !
" Within ! beneath ! around !
" See ! see ! see !
" Sing ! sing ! sing !
" I am here ! I am here !
" It is spring ! it is spring " !

Ah ! the cascade of beautiful sound !
Now list to the wonderful tale
The Sage from his wisdom will cull ;
(All blameworthy he if 'tis dull),
Say, which of the two shall prevail ?

" The song of the bird is vibration
" Of one particular chord ;
" By simple multiplication,
" X or y, per second or hour,
" You arrive at its register, pitch, or power—
" For example : a bit "—
Dear Lord !
That's it !
The song of the blackbird to him
Is naught but vibration,
(And multiplication),
Per second or hour ! Why then—
But hark !
Once again.

" God is good !
" God is love !
" Here on the earth,
" And in heaven above."
('Tis naught but vibration !)
" Sing ! oh sing !
" Of the hope in spring ! "
(Or in multiplication !)
" Come quick ! come quick ! "

Yes, the blossom is thick,
The fruit will follow in time ;
Then all hail ! to the Spring,
And to everything,
Breathing such hope sublime.

ANN'S BOY.

By Ruth Duffin.

(*Concluded.*)

" Ann's boy " was a nine days' wonder in the village. No enquiries were made about him, no one seemed to have lost a little boy, and by-and-by the wonder died down, and the neighbours grew accustomed to seeing Ann always with the small green figure by her side. Ann herself was wonderfully happy, and with increased happiness her work seemed to thrive. Her hens grew plump and fetched good prices on market days, and the state of her potato and cabbage patch was a matter of envy to less fortunate cultivators.

" It's just the heart I be puttin' into my work," said Ann, when the neighbours commented on the size of her cabbages.

" Ye're just workin' yourself to death, Ann," said old Dan Casey, who had wandered out one morning to smoke a pipe on the thyme-covered ditch by Ann's door. " Ye're as thin as me pipe stalk, an' ye have a right to be takin' care of yourself wid that ugly cough ye have."

" Sure I be takin' plinty of care," Ann replied, " but the work's to be done if me an' the wee boy's to live through the winter."

" Min' ye, thon's a cliver boy," said Dan, wishful to please, and rendered good-humoured by the sunshine that was sending a warm glow through his worn old clothes.

" Is it cliver ! " said Ann. " He bates all for cliverness ! There's not a thing he doesn't know. And he's that independent, too, the way he goes off with himself. He had me frightened at first the way he'd be sthrayin', but sure he always comes back safe. One morning here he slipped out of his bed, an' me sleepin,' an' the first thing I seen when I looked out, here he was comin' home barefut through the jew an' it barely grey light yit, an' lookin' as ould an' wise as ye plase."

" I seen him there a wee bit ago along the road playin' wid th' ould goat," said Dan, " an' her skippin' like a kid."

"Och, the bastes is all wild about him," said Ann proudly. "I've seen him wid a robin sittin' on his shoulder—him talkin'. an' the wee bird answerin' him back, for all the world like a Christian."

"Ay," said Dan slowly, "very belike they would undherstand other." He nodded his head and went home to dinner.

* *

All through the summer Ann continued to be happier than she had ever been before, but as it waned the neighbours shook their heads and said she was failing fast, and would scarcely see the first snow.

"An' what's to become of the boy when she goes?" said Mrs. Maguire. "He's a strhange-like lookin' wee thing, 'an' the other children they don't have much dalin's with him, only now an' again whin he might be showin' them the way he can call the birds till him. What's to come of him at all?"

"No fear, he'll be pervided for," said old Dan.

"An' how, if you're so wise?" queried Mrs. Maguire sharply.

But Dan only smoked his pipe in provoking silence. He was one of the few people to whom the strange child would speak; they were sometimes to be seen "dandherin'" over the fields together, the little boy "talkin' an' talkin'," as Mrs. Maguire said, "but if ye come up wid them, niver a word out of him no more than if he was a dumb animal."

The long summer days passed slowly away, and the mountains were purple with the autumnal glory of the heather. Then in the twilight, when the plovers called to each other over the bog, there came a sharpness in the air, and in the mornings the whins were silvery with dewy gossamer, and the ferns in the ditches along the roadside turned yellow and died one by one. Like the ferns, Ann seemed to wither at the approach of winter, and when the first feathery shower of snow fell she was unable to leave her bed.

The kindly neighbours often called in to see her, and brought her what gifts they could.

She lay smiling peacefully, and not worrying at all.

"This has been the gran' summer to me," she would say, and sometimes her mind would wander a little. Once she said:

"I wisht Johnnie would come back from America in time to see the boy"; and when they said:

"Sure Johnnie's dead an' buried, Ann, this long years ago," she only answered:

"Ay, I know, but he would have been quare an' proud to see him, wouldn't he now?" And she stroked the boy's curly head.

He would sit at the foot of the bed, with his legs crossed under him, and gaze at Ann with dark unchildish eyes, in which was the shadow of a hidden fear—of something beyond his comprehension. He spoke little, but sometimes he would slip a small hand into hers, or softly stroke her cheek.

"He's the ould-fashionedest wee piece," said Mrs. Cregan. "Not a squeak out of him all the time. It's not like a child at all he is."

On the day that Ann died he had sat for hours in his usual place at her feet, shivering slightly every now and then, as though in fear. But when, at the last, Ann had opened her eyes and looked at him, he had nodded at her with his wise old smile, and had paid no attention to the neighbours gathered in the little kitchen. When all was over and the women had done all they could ever do now for Ann, Mrs. Maguire looked round for the child.

"Where's the boy?" she said.

"I niver seen him leave the room," said Mrs. Cregan. "Very belike he'll have been frightened, the crathur, an' run out with himself."

But there was no sign of "Ann's boy"; from that hour no one ever saw him again. The neighbours searched far and wide, all except old Dan, who smoked his pipe in silence. At last he said:

"Yez may as well lave sarchin'; yez'll niver find him for all your lookin'. He's away till his own people."

"Talk sinse," said Mrs. Maguire; "sure the child had noan to go till."

"Have it yer own way, if ye must," said Dan. "There's some people think they know iverything, an' can see nothin' only dust whin the win' blows on the road.

BY THE WAY.

It is sometimes very hard to see what all our denominational and theological distinctions amount to. For instance, take the case of that notorious, orthodox evangelist, Billy Sunday, who a short time ago stated his intention of leading a crusade against Unitarianism.

* *

In the very same newspaper in which this statement was made, Billy Sunday also gave his views on hell. He was so far what we understand as orthodox that he declared his belief in hell as a place of torture. But this torture did not come from the conventional, everlasting fire; it came from a man's memory of his past. "Hell," he said, "is a place where a man will remember," and in so far as he has committed sin, his memory will be torture; and in so far as his sin is outrageous, so his torture will be magnified in intensity. With very little modification, that little body of Christians, who are commonly termed Unitarians, but whose true name is Free Christians, or Non-Subscribers, could agree with Billy Sunday's views. Whence, then, the quarrel?

* *

If we held more tenaciously to the indubitable belief that memory can be hell, even if the memory is not awakened except in another life, we should be less ready to let our righteous indignation against sin take the form of a mere threat for retaliation.

* *

Those men who were in any degree directly responsible for such an outrage as the Lusitania murder have an awful hell in prospect. Our business is not to retaliate in like kind, whether by cowardly attacks on unarmed aliens in our country, or by brutality against the enemy in the field. Our business is not murder, but to prevent murder. We have to crush Germany in the name of humanity. If any men who are qualified to enlist feel their blood boil at this last outrage, they can do their manhood justice by enlisting, and thus bring nearer the end of the German carnival of murder.

* *

Lord Kitchener announces that he needs another 300,000 men to complete our Army. Until they are forthcoming there is a big gap.

* *

Many years ago, in ancient Rome, so the story goes, a great gap appeared in the very heart of the city. A soothsayer gave it out that this dangerous gap would never be closed until it were filled by the most precious thing the city knew. Then Marcus Curtius, a young knight, and admittedly the pride of the whole people, leaped with his horse into the gap, which immediately closed up over him.

* *

Not, perhaps, in quite the same way, but in quite the same spirit, we have to-day to be prepared to fill the gap.

* *

Apropos of the discussion which was raging a short time ago about prohibition, one of our leading newspapers gives the following quaint objections, overheard one Monday morning on a short railway journey:—

"It'll hit the chemists. Look at the pick-me-ups they sell on Monday mornings."

"The men in the big forges can't do without beer. They can't perspire properly off water."

"Bread and meat'll go up, because the demand will increase. Teetotallers eat more than anybody."

Each of these contributions to the controversy was made by a pessimistic passenger at whose side sat a brother of the road intent upon comforting him with an extract from the morning paper.

"There's an article here, Tom, about alcohol substitutes. It says sal volatile's a good substitute for whisky or brandy."

"Fancy me," rejoined Tom bitterly, "taking a customer into the hotel and calling for 'two smelling salts and hot water'!"

* *

It is a pity, however, that the Govern-

ment has not gone much further than it has in combating what is admittedly a real obstacle to the full output of munitions of war.

* *

By the way, in closing, I should like to say that one of our Non-Subscribing ministers distinguished himself quite creditably by an apt retort in a recent law case. The case had dragged on several days longer than expected, with the result that Friday found this minister in the witness box many miles from home and Sunday in prospect. One of the counsel remarked on the nearness of Sunday, and asked him if he had his sermon prepared.

"No," he replied, "but I have chosen a text."

"Oh, and what is it?"

"On this hang all the law and the prophets."

* *

That is a bon mot full of possibilities, and I will not mar the piquancy by seeking to develop them.

VIATOR.

Reports.

Unity Guild.—Besides increasing the number of excursions to be held this year from four to five, a further development is being made this summer. Those who intend to join the parties are requested to send their names to the Local Treasurer of the church with which they are connected, instead of to the General Secretary, as heretofore. The Local Treasurers are also made responsible for collecting the fares. It is hoped this will arouse greater local interest in the summer programme. The co-operation of all members is earnestly desired in order to make this new scheme work smoothly.

Nature smiled genially on the party, numbering over 50, which collected in the Central Hall doorway, awaiting the motors which were to carry them to Grey Abbey on the 22nd of May. Sharp to time we started, and found the country full of many delicate shades of green, bathed in rich sunlight. We were whirled away to the gates of Mountstewart, where a hearty welcome awaited us from the Minister of our Church at Grey Abbey, Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, who had so kindly arranged for us to visit this large and beautiful demesne belonging to Lord Londonderry. It had been arranged to spend about an hour here, but there was so much of interest and beauty to see that the party preferred to linger beyond the allotted time. On leaving the grounds we took to the motors again, and were whisked off down the road to the village of Grey Abbey. With appetites sharpened by the walk, we did ample justice to the good things which were supplied. When we had finished tea, and had enjoyed the fine view of the surrounding country, we set out for the ruins of the Abbey from which the village takes its name. These are situated in the grounds of General Montgomery, and we are indebted to Mr. Tilson for obtaining permission for our party to visit them. The writer thinks that the ruins are seen to best advantage by moonlight, but on this May evening they looked sombre and beautiful indeed in their aloofness. A wonderful history must attach to these ruins, and our President gave us a short account of their story. The party broke up into little groups, and wandered at will amongst the standing walls and fallen stones. Some of us drank the clear, cool water of the Wishing Well; but what passed through our minds while doing so must ever remain a secret, for to tell would, of course, break the charm. After passing an hour in these old-world surroundings, it seemed like stepping into another life to begin to think of motor-cars. But trains from Belfast had to be caught by some, and the return journey could not be postponed any longer. After we had visited the church and manse, we bade farewell to our kindly friends, and were soon gliding swiftly over the white road, with happy memories of the enjoyable time we had spent. This excursion was far better attended than any the Guild had last year. The next outing is fixed for 12th June, and it is hoped that members and friends will come to it in even larger numbers.

Ballyhemlin.—The Annual May Sermon, which is always from the same text: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," was preached on Sunday afternoon, May 9th, by the Rev. John Barron. The meeting-house was simply and tastefully decorated with wild flowers. The collection, which was on behalf of the Sunday School Motor Ambulance, amounted to £2 6s. 6d.

* *

Crumlin.—A very successful Jumble Sale was held here on Wednesday evening, April 21st. Every member of the congregation gave a helping hand, and they were well assisted by kind friends of other denominations. The sale realized £38 14s. nett. So after paying a debt of £8 on the Manse Account, it leaves us with a balance of over £30 towards the Organ Fund. At the Communion Service on Sunday May 9th, which was very well attended, the following were given the right hand of fellowship, and invited to join in the service:—George and John Aicken, Jennie and Annie Smith, and Catherine Bradshaw.

* *

Holywood.—The Annual Sunday School Prize Distribution took place on Sunday morning, May 2nd. The attendance during the past year had been exceedingly good, and thirty-four scholars were entitled to prizes, but all had volunteered to forego their book prizes so that the money might be sent to the Queen's "Work for Women" Fund. In recognition of this self-denial certificates were sent from the fund for the prize-winners, and these were distributed by Miss Greenfield, who gave an excellent address on "Self-denial." As is usual on these occasions, the scholars brought bunches of flowers, which, together with the collection, were sent to the Belfast Hospital for Sick Children.

* *

Mountpottinger.—Following morning service on May 2nd, a meeting of the congregation was held, at which the chair was taken by Rev. J. A. Kelly, Clerk to the Bangor Presbytery. By a unanimous vote it was decided to send a call to Rev. Mathew Watkins, of Moneyrea, as successor to Rev. J. Worthington, B.A. The same was duly given at a meeting of the Presbytery held on Thursday, 13th May, and the congregation has since had notice of its acceptance. Mr. Watkins hopes to take up his duties on September 1st.

* *

Rademon.—On Friday evening, May 7th, we were favoured by a visit from the Rev. P. Godding, of Ballyclare, the occasion being the last meeting of the season in connection with the Total Abstinence Society. An address on Temperance was delivered by the reverend gentleman, and was heard with much pleasure by the audience. Unfortunately the attendance was somewhat below the average owing to the lateness of the season and the clearness of the evenings. It is hoped, however, that when Mr. Godding comes again to Rademon he will meet a larger number of the young people of the neighbourhood who take an interest in the temperance movement. This meeting was the eighth held under the auspices of the society since the autumn. The session's work can be regarded as fairly successful. An average of about sixty has been maintained at the ordinary meetings, and at the New Year social there must have been 150 people present. The work has been continued in the same undenominational lines during the past eighteen years, and whilst old helpers leave the district, or sometimes lose interest, new assistants always come forward. A class for preparation met regularly each week throughout the winter, and about a dozen boys and girls laboured enthusiastically to make the programmes interesting. Lest the principles inculcated should be forgotten before the beginning of next session, it has been arranged to hold a special temperance service in the afternoon of the first Sunday of August.

The following gentlemen visited the Society during the season, and delivered very helpful addresses:—Mr. G. London Ward, Rev. M. Watkins, Rev. J. D. Davies, Rev. F. Jamison, M.A., Rev. A. Amey, Mr. Herring, and Rev. P. Godding.

Perhaps it may be added that the resolutions in favour of the total prohibition of the manufacture and sale of intoxicating drinks during the war, sent out by the Temperance Committee of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, were adopted by the congregation here on the last Sunday of April.

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